

AML 3041: 1176 The American War Machine Spring 2015

Instructor: Najwa H. Al-Tabaa

Email: naltabaa@ufl.edu (use Sakai mail – preferred mode of communication)

Phone Number: Department of English: 352.392.6650

Office: Turlington 4321

Office Hours: MW Period 6 and by appointment

Class Meeting Time: MWF Period 5

Location: LIT 0239

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to explore the development of war literature and narratives after reconstruction and up to the present. The main focus of the course will be in the 20th Century and we will trace development of WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, and the literary responses to them. We will end the course by focusing on the present moment with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We will also put contemporary war texts in conversation with both earlier historical moments and texts in order to help us trace both the historical and literary developments but also to reflect on the long lasting traumatic impact of these wars on individuals and the nation. A large component of war literature is trauma studies so we will also examine how fiction is not only a vehicle for examining these war moments but also how these authors (and us as readers) are able to work through the traumas of these historical moments. Trauma is an integral component to war narratives, particularly in present day with the awareness of PTSD (historically known as “shell shock”). The traumatic impact of war we will explore in this course will be on the individual, collective, national, and historical levels. We will also trace the ways in the traumatic impact of war has a transhistorical presence (for example, the development of WWI and WWII, or the colonial impact of the Vietnam War). To help elaborate this point, Michael Rothberg, in his book on trauma studies, *Traumatic Realism*, argues that, “realism, modernism, and postmodernism can also be understood as persistent response to the demands of history. Like the demands themselves, these responses are also social; they provide frameworks for the representation and interpretation of history. In the representation of a historical event, in other words, a text’s “realist” component seeks strategies for referring to and documenting the world, its “modernist” side questions its ability to document history transparently; and its “postmodern” moment responds to the economic and political conditions of its emergence and public circulation” (9). It is through this lens that we will examine texts addressing the real, the documentation of the historical event (and literature’s ability to provide a “true” historical account), and the socio-economic impacts of war. While trauma is only one of the exigencies in which will examine modern warfare, tracing the historical and literary movements Rothberg outlines will help us put the traumatic moments in conversation with the historical event(s). It is this framework and these questions that anchor this course, which will lead us to think about not only the

traumatic impact of war but also the development of the American War machine into the 21st century. While the majority of the reading will be novels, we will also look at non-fiction journalism, poetry, comics, and films.

Course Goals:

By the end of the semester you should have improved your ability to do the following:

- Have a better grasp American Literature, Culture and History through the theme of “war;”
- Develop your literary analysis skills and engage with closely with primary sources and critical sources;
- To draw upon your existing knowledge base and to think critically about the text(s);
- To synthesize ideas and materials from outside sources;
- To navigate the UF library research facilities and tools;
- To formulate clear and answerable research questions;
- Receive instruction in the logic and form of documentation within a discipline (MLA); learn writing strategies for integrating source material into your own prose (quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material); write analytical and argumentative papers appropriate to genres, rhetorical situations and larger discourse communities.

Required Texts

You may find these at the UF bookstore, www.ufl.bkstr.com (the one at the Reitz). Additionally the books are readily available on amazon.com and at local bookstores.

A Farewell to Arms (Ernest Hemingway) ISBN: 978-0684801469

The Harlem Hellfighters (Max Brooks) ISBN: 978-0307464972

Catch-22 (Joseph Heller) ISBN: 978-1451626650

Ceremony (Leslie Marmon Silko) ISBN: 978-0-143104919

The Complete Maus (Art Spiegelman) ISBN: 978- 0141014081

Home (Toni Morrison) ISBN: 978-0307594167

Dispatches (Michael Herr) ISBN: 978-0679635250

The Lotus Eaters (Tatjana Soli) ISBN: 978-0312674441

Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk (Ben Fountain) ISBN: 978-0-06-088561-8

Redeployment (Phil Klay) ISBN: 978-1594204999

War Fix (David Axe) ISBN: 978-1561634644

Films (available to rent on Amazon.com and at the UF library)

The Thin Red Line (Terrence Malick)

Full Metal Jacket (Stanley Kubrick)

*In addition to the required text, see schedule for resources and course readings on Sakai

Course Assignments

Participation: 100 points

This is a discussion-based class, do you need to actively participate. Any in-class activities or group work will be reflected here. Also, failure to attend class will impact your discussion grade.

Quizzes: 180 points

Pop reading quizzes, 10 throughout the semester (lowest grade will be dropped), 20 points each. Each quiz will be based on that week's readings.

Midterm Exam (Take Home): 200 points

You will have a take home midterm exam, you will have a week to complete it; it will be in the form of short essays. More information will be provided on Sakai.

Historical Source Presentation: 100 points

You will find an original historical source related to the course materials (photograph, newspaper article, interview, etc.). You will present your source the class (2-3 minute presentation) and provide a short 500 word write up about the source. More information will be provided on Sakai. Presentations will begin in week 3 and will go in alphabetical order.

Trauma Comic Strip 20 points

You must physically create a comic strip that engage the themes of the course and write a brief paragraph describing your comic and reflecting on the creative process. More details will be provided on Sakai.

Final Research Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 100 points

You will provide a description of your final research project and you will include a list of 5-6 secondary sources with a brief description of the source and how you will use it in your final paper.

Final Research Paper: 300 points, 3000-3500 words

A page paper based on your own research questions/interested, supported with 4-6 secondary sources, that closely looks at the text. More information will be provided on Sakai.

General Grading Criteria for Papers:

“A” Paper

Ideas are clearly explained and supported. There is a strong focus and organization; thesis claims/ideas are maintained throughout the text. All supporting claims reinforce that larger trajectory of the argument. The paper critically engages the text(s) and provides thoughtful support and analysis. Ideas are developed and attention is give both to the themes of the text, rhetorical devices, and the larger themes of the course/prompts. The essay’s writing is clear, and MLA formatting and mechanics have no errors.

“B” Paper

Ideas are mostly clearly explained and supported. Focus, organization, and the larger claims and ideas are strong; however, one or two points need further explaining/better focus. No floating quotes and all sources are introduced and properly supported. Ideas generally developed but could be expanded to further emphasize the main points. The essay’s writing is mainly clear, and MLA formatting and mechanics may have one or two errors.

“C” Paper

Ideas and claims are somewhat supported. Some organization is found, but the larger claims need more support to validate them. There are floating quotes, underdeveloped ideas, and the writing, mechanics, and MLA formatting has significant errors, but is not unreadable.

“D” Paper

Ideas and claims are not supported. Organization is lacking and the argument is difficult to follow. Ideas are not developed and the text is not closely engaged. There are many mechanical and MLA formatting errors.

“E” Papers

Ideas and claims are not supported. Organization is lacking and there are many errors. Writing is unreadable. No citations.

More Detailed Grading Criteria and Rubrics will be provided for each assignment on Sakai.

GRADING SCALE

A	4.0	94-100	940-1000		C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-93	900-939		C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899		D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869		D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829		D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799		E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Attendance

This is a discussion based, participation-oriented, skills-based writing course, which means that you will build your skills incrementally and systematically in each class throughout the semester. Much of the learning that takes place is spontaneous and difficult to reproduce outside of class. Consequently, attendance is required. If you miss more than **six** periods during the semester, you will **fail** the entire course. The only exemptions from this policy are those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. **Absences for illness or family emergencies will count toward your six allowed absences. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be deducted participation points. 20 minutes or more will result in an absence.**

*****If you are absent: You are required to submit by the next class period a 250-word response discussing that missed day's reading. Failure to do so will result in a 10-point deduction from your overall grade. *****

*****If you miss a quiz, or are late for a quiz you will not be able to make it up unless it is an officially excused absence – must go through the Dean of Student's Office*****

If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. Please do not come late to class or leave class early; arriving late or leaving early disrupts the entire class. Please make every effort to be on time and do not schedule things that conflict with class time. Additionally, missing a scheduled conference with the instructor will result in an absence. If you need to reschedule a conference, you must give ample warning, a minimum of one hour before the conference schedule through email.

If you are absent from class, you are still responsible for submitting any assignment that may be due that day.

Preparation

You are expected to be prepared for every class, including completing all reading and writing assignments on time. Failure to be prepared for or to contribute to class

discussion will impact your overall grade. Make sure you check Sakai and your email regularly – this is where assignments, course related materials and announcements will be posted.

Make sure you back up your work. Failure of technology is not an excuse for late papers.

If there is a word you do not know in a reading or other assignment, make sure you look it up. Also if there is a reference to a person or event and you do not know who or what it is, look it up. Part of being prepared for class is not just doing the reading, but making sure you grasp what you are reading. If you have questions about a specific reference or idea, bring it with you to class to discuss or post it on the Help/questions section of the discussion board.

Proofread, proofread, proofread! Before you turn in any assignment, whether it be a major assignment, a discussion board posting, or even an email, make sure you read over it to catch any grammatical mistakes. A great way to catch your grammar mistakes is to read your paper aloud. It is often easier to catch your grammatical mistakes when you hear them rather than looking over your paper with tired eyes.

Late Work

Late submissions and assignments will not be accepted. Extreme circumstances and emergencies do occur, so extensions will be granted at the instructor's discretion on a case-by case-basis. If you feel that you require an extension, please contact the instructor in a timely manner – less than 24 hours is not sufficient. If you fail to submit an assignment by the deadline you will receive a zero for that assignment.

Mode of Submission

All papers must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman (or equivalent), double-spaced, 1-inch margins, following MLA guidelines. All assignments will be submitted electronically through Sakai. It is your responsibility to make sure your documents are readable in all aspects for your instructor. Your final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. If you do not submit your paper to the appropriate place or save it in a way that can be opened by the instructor, you will not receive credit for the assignment. Please save your paper in the following format:

NamePaper.docx (or .doc, or .rtf. – you may use the Apple pages equivalent to Word documents as well, or save your paper as a .pdf).

Academic Honesty

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode/honorcode.php>

Important Tip: Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course. Plagiarism can occur even without any intention to deceive if the student fails to know and employ proper documentation techniques.

Unless otherwise indicated by the instructor for class group work, all work must be your own. Nothing written for another course will be accepted.

Graded Materials

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a re-submission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own.

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Technology

- **Laptops/Tablets:** You are welcome to bring laptops to class to take notes, however, if your device prevents you from paying attention in class, i.e. you are caught Facebooking or tweeting, shopping on line, or anything non-course related, you will be asked to put it away and will lose laptop privileges for the rest of the semester.
- **Cell Phones/MP3 players/Portable Electronic Devices, etc.:** Please keep your device put away and on silent at all times.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/d>

Schedule (Tentative and subject to change)

***Indicates resource is on Sakai**

Week 1 – January 5 - 9

W Course Introduction – Modern Warfare and Literary Analysis

Walt Whitman's "A March in the Ranks Hard-Prest, and the Road Unknown"

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/237384>

Walt Whitman's "A Sight in Camp"

<http://www.bartleby.com/142/124.html>

F The Civil War's Mark on the 20th Century
Read *The Red Badge of Courage* (Stephen Crane)
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/73/73-h/73-h.htm>

Week 2 -- January 12-16

M The Great War

Read *A Farwell to Arms* up to Chapter XVIII

W The 20th Century and WWI

Read *A Farwell to Arms* up to XXX

F Modern Warfare: The War to End All Wars
Finish *A Farwell to Arms*

Week 3 – January 19-23

M – No Class MLK

W – Race, War and the 20th Century
Fredrick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass An American Slave Written By Himself*

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23-h.htm>

- F *Harlem Hellfighters* (Brooks) up to “Poems by Alan Seeger”
Race, War and Comics
Finish *Harlem Hellfighters* (Brooks)

Week 4 -- January 26-30

M World War Begins Again

Read *Catch-22* (Heller) up to Chapter 12

W War Cycle(s)

Read *Catch-22* up to Chapter 20

F War Cycle(s) Continued

Read *Catch-22* up to Chapter 26

Week 5 February 2-6

M War Cycle(s) Continued

Read *Catch-22* up to Chapter 36

W Yossarian's Fate

Finish *Catch-22*

F War [Dis]illusions

Watch *The Thin Red Line* (Malick)

Week 6 February 9-13

M Native American Literature and War

Read *Ceremony* (Silko) up to page 75

W Oral Histories

Read *Ceremony* up to page the page 129

F

Read *Ceremony* up to page 186

Week 7 February 16 – 20

M – Healing Stories
Finish *Ceremony*
Midterm Assigned

W -- Holocaust Survivor's Tale and Comics
Read *Maus I* (Spiegelman)

F – Bleeding History
Finish *Maus II*

Week 8 February 23-27

M Race Wars

Read *Home* (Morrison) up to Chapter 7

W The War at Home

Finish *Home*

F Good Morning Vietnam!

Read Dispatches up to “Hell Sucks”
Midterm Due!

March 2- 6 Spring Break!

Week 9 March 9-13

M New Journalism

Read *Dispatches* up to Colleagues

W The Failed War

Finish *Dispatches*

F Soldier Stories

Selections from Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* TBA on Sakai

Week 10 March 16-20

M Vietnam and Women Journalists

Read *The Lotus Eaters* (Soli) up to Chapter 5

W Vietnam and Women Journalists Continued

Read *The Lotus Eaters* up to Chapter 9

F Vietnam and Women Journalists Continued

Read *The Lotus Eaters* up to Chapter 13

Week 11 March 23-27

M Vietnam and Women Journalists Continued

Read *The Lotus Eaters* up to Chapter 17

W Vietnam and Women Journalists Continued

Finish *The Lotus Eaters*

F The Smell of Napalm in the Morning

Watch *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick)

Week 12 March 30-April 3

M Celebrity Soldiers

Read *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* up to "We Are All Americans Here"

W Spectacles and Soldiers

Read *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* up to "There is Everything There Is"

F The Most Sought After American Heroes

Read *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* up to "Raped by Angels"

Final Paper Proposal Due!

Week 13 April 6-10

M – War Voyeurs

Finish *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*

W Soldier Poet

Walt Whitman's "The Wound Dresser"

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/237970>

Read Selections from *Here, Bullet* (Turner) TBA on Sakai

F Soldier Poet Continued

Read Selections from *Here, Bullet* (Turner) TBA

*Attend the UF Comics Conference April 10-12, details on Sakai

Week 14 April 13-17

M War Today

Selections from *Redeployment* (Phil Klay) TBA

W War Today

Selections from *Redeployment* TBA

F War Today

Selections from *Redeployment* TBA

Week 15 April 20-22

M War Addiction

Read *War Fix* (David Axe)

W Course Wrap Up

Trauma Comic Strip Due!

*****Final Paper Due Monday April 27*****